

INTERACTIVE THREE-DIMENSIONAL MULTIMEDIA I/O DEVICE FOR A COM- PUTER

Abstract

A multimedia I/O device for use with computers that acts as a three-dimensional multimedia communication device having both an input and output capability, including speakers for audio output, and voice input via a microphone. It also has the ability to control motion to catch the user's attention and/or to entertain. The multimedia I/O device is formed in the shape of a selected character and can resemble a human-like character, a celebrity, a nonhuman character such as an animal, or any other mythical or imaginary character. It is used as an animated device to catch the user's attention in regard to the arrival of email or a system event that requires the user's attention, when issuing audio alarms, or as a local message system. It can be used to represent remote individuals when in a chat room, or when playing games. For games, the device can be used as a three-dimensional software opponent that represents actual opponents located in remote computers on a network, or alternatively, represents a software

opponent for use in single person games. Optionally, voice recognition allows commands or data to be input to the system via the device. Multiple multimedia I/O devices can be used simultaneously for multi-player games, which can be played by remotely located users. A universal base unit allows detachable characters to be replaceably attached to the base unit. Therefore, different characters can be substituted for different games, etc. An alternative multimedia I/O device can directly communicate with the computer without the base unit. The multimedia I/O device may be controlled, via software, by any application program.